

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
THE RESOURCES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

BALD EAGLE BREEDING SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

The breeding season of bald eagles in California extends primarily from February through July. Each year, cooperating agencies, organizations, and private individuals participate in a statewide monitoring program to document nesting activities at each nesting territory. In 1997, 160 recently active breeding territories were surveyed, and the number increases yearly.

Annual breeding season surveys are an important part of the population recovery effort. Survey information is used by resource agencies to aid breeding territory management or protection activities. Additionally, population status and trends must be monitored annually to provide the data needed for assessing population recovery.

Specific assignments and scheduling of observer time are usually handled at the agency district or regional office level. In general, agencies are responsible for surveys of territories on or near their own lands, with Department of Fish and Game also surveying on private lands. Field personnel should coordinate their surveys with other agencies or with volunteers to avoid duplication of effort or to arrange for survey help.

The bald eagle breeding population is increasing annually. So, it is important that suspected new nesting territories be adequately checked, especially early in the breeding season.

Territories should be checked at least three times during the nesting season, although more frequent checking is preferred. Emphasis should be placed on checking during incubation and early nestling periods.

1. **Early March** (early incubation) - Territories in northern California should be checked in the first half of March, if possible, or as soon thereafter as road or weather conditions allow. The purpose of the first check is to determine whether the territory is occupied (record presence of adults, courtship behavior, evidence of nest repair or construction, incubation).
2. **Late April or early May** (early nestling period) - This check is needed to confirm that a territory is unoccupied, or if occupied in March, to determine whether the breeding pair is still tending the nest (incubating eggs or tending young nestlings).
3. **Mid June** (late nestling period) - The main purpose of this check is to determine how many nestlings are approaching fledging age.

Survey dates may be modified from these recommended time periods if the territories can be checked more frequently or if particular breeding pairs are known to begin nesting especially early or late in the season.

We recommend that observers report the stage of development of nestlings in accordance with An Illustrated Guide for Identifying Developmental Stages of Bald Eagle Nestlings in the Field, by G. P. Carpenter (April 1990). This booklet is available from the San Francisco Zoological Society, Sloat Blvd. at the Pacific Ocean, San Francisco, CA 94132 (415-753-7080).

SUBMITTAL OF SURVEY FORMS

Please report observations on the **CALIFORNIA BALD EAGLE NESTING TERRITORY SURVEY FORM (REVISED 3/98)**.

Please mail all completed forms by
September 1 of the survey year to:

Mr. Ronald Jurek
California Department of Fish and Game
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 958 14

Forms will be maintained in Department files and annual survey results will be compiled on the basis of these reports. If you have questions or need additional forms, please contact Mr. Jurek at the above address or at Rjurek@dfg.ca.gov, PHONE 916-654-4267, CALNET 464-4267, FAX 916-653-2588.

California Department of Fish and Game
CALIFORNIA BALD EAGLE

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NESTING TERRITORY SURVEY FORM

Revised

11/99

County: _____

Survey Year: _____

Property Owner: _____ (If USFS: _____ National Forest)

Name (or general location) of territory: _____

Name of nearest water body: _____

Location of nest: T_____ R_____ Sec _____ 1/4_____ 1/16_____ UTMn_____

No. of nests in territory - Intact: _____, Remnant: _____ UTMe_____

Nest Tree: Species _____ Year last used _____ Nest: Year last used _____

NOTE: Please attach a map showing the location of any newly documented nest tree.

Describe tree and nest condition and size, and any other remarks:

For each visit to the territory, note, in detail, the times, number and age of birds, behavior of birds (lying, perching, etc.), evidence of nesting (nest maintenance, courtship, incubation posture), disturbances, and other pertinent information:

Initials of Observer	Date of Visit	Observations
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(Attach additional pages, if necessary)

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General Remarks: _____

PLEASE SUMMARIZE OBSERVATIONS:

A. Successful nestings: No. of young known fledged _____ or probably fledged _____

B. If no fledglings were produced this season, please answer the following, if known:

How many adults were seen in the territory? ____ Were adults seen in the nest? Yes No

Number of nestlings observed: _____ Evidence of nest repair or construction? Yes No

Was an adult in incubation posture? Yes No

When did nesting fail?: During incubation ____ or nestling stage ____

Other remarks: _____

Observers names: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Phone: () _____ FAX or email: _____

Mail completed forms by **SEPTEMBER 1** of the survey year to:

California Department of Fish and Game
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attn: Ron Jurek

916-654-4267 FAX 916-653-2588 RJurek@dfg.ca.gov

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

Observations (continued)

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